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NATIVE NORTH AMERICA AS REFLECTED IN  
THEORIES OF COLONIALISM AND POSTCOLONIALISM:  
AN OVERVIEW

Contemporary Native American writing—be it literary, critical, historical, anthropological, ethnographical, or political—is historically conscious, carrying the burden of colonialism; consequently, always in search of survival techniques, that is, possibilities for dialogue between Native and Western interpretations of past and present, often theorized in the critical language of postcolonialism. The essay below will give an overview of the still prevailing colonial situation in Native North America and will highlight those postcolonial concepts that apply.

One of the most prominent ways through which colonialism survives is what Calvin Martin called “*historiographic colonialism*” (33). Martin himself vaguely defines this term as excluding “the Indian thoughtworld” (33) from American histories, but a handful of meanings have been bestowed upon this category by others since the time Martin introduced it. In my understanding it conveys the following implications: 1) American historiography has been mostly concerned with White history dating from 1492, ignoring the several thousand years of indigenous history (pre-contact issues have dominated discussion in anthropology, ethnology, ethnohistory but not historiography);<sup>1</sup> 2) 90% of post-contact Indian history has been written from a Eurocentric perspective; 3) Indian-White relations, from the same perspective, has been the main focus on “diplomatic history or foreign policy” (Fixico 89); 4) what has been

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<sup>1</sup> According to Donald F. Fixico, “different schools of thought like the Germ Theory and Turner Thesis have encouraged historians to ignore the original inhabitants of the entire Western Hemisphere.” (“Ethics” 85)

written on indigenous history and Indian-White relations is usually biased and rests on documents, produced by colonists and explorers, not incorporating arguments from Native American oral history (Axtell 14);<sup>2</sup> and 5) Western historiography has used an “imaginative double vision,” as Christopher Vecsey points out (qtd. in Axtell 23), using “deep research and empathy to see other people as they saw themselves, but [...] [using] [...] hindsight and objectifying scholarship to see them as they could not see themselves, as only we can. Thus we achieve historical vision, at once ‘loving and scrutinizing,’ [...] without needing to commit professional and cultural suicide.”<sup>3</sup> This way historians can rest assured that the “hegemony of Western historiography” (Nabokov 239) remains undisturbed.

When pondering over the effects of Western historiography and anthropology on Native American existence, C. Richard King concludes:

Historical and anthropological discourses [...] sanctioned the appropriation and naming of difference, mirroring the power to take, name and recreate spaces, to simultaneously dispossess and redistribute peoples. They fixed the past, legitimating hierarchies and asymmetries within narrative histories.

Interpreting cultures, they secured colonial contexts. (5)

Thus, historiographic colonialism implies not only a dishonest representation of the past of the colonized, but also altering the future by sanctioning the wrong direction the past took for the colonized. “[M]isrepresentation of reality” becomes “its reordering” (Loomba 57), literally a matter of life and death for native peoples in everyday existence. Evidently, historiography and colonialism intertwine, and they do so as political, ideological, and power discourses. Depending on which evolutionary stage the native-colonizer relationship is in, their struggles have been theorized into colonialism, post-colonialism, postcolonialism, and neo-colonialism.

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<sup>2</sup> Angela Cavender Wilson calls this “double standard”: American historians do not consult a nation’s own material if that nation happens to be Native, as they do in case of other, e.g. European nations (101–102).

<sup>3</sup> Peter Nabokov outlined the major schools in American Indian historicity, with a view on how scholars balance their “loving (or hating) and scrutinizing” feelings towards their Native subjects: to the “armchair evolutionists” belong (a) the “school of suspicion,” (b) the “school of empathy,” and (c) the “school between the two camps”; then there are (d) those who represent “historical particularism”; and, finally, (e) the “antihistorical school” (6–14).

There is no consensus concerning which stage Native North America belongs to. Not in the neo-colonial one, as that would entail formal independence, while “remaining economically and/or culturally dependent” (Loomba 7), and no Indian nation is independent.<sup>4</sup> The official status of Native Americans has changed from foreign nations (with whom treaties were made, and who were to be pushed Westward) first into “dependent domestic nations”<sup>5</sup> (to be locked into reservations and watched over paternalistically), later into citizens of the States in 1924 in the US (without their consent and with an assimilating intention), thus cutting off any hope for total independence. Colonialism, then, is far from over for Native Americans; consequently, we cannot talk about the post-colonial condition, either. Post-colonialism is understood as what comes after the colonial period, implying the end of it. When addressing such issues, most American Indian critics respond the same way as Arnold Krupat does, proclaiming that “there is no ‘post-’ to the colonial status of Native Americans” (30), who still try to survive under the colonial imposition. Post-colonialism and neo-colonialism must, therefore, be crossed out. I examine below how colonialism and postcolonialism (theorizing the former and its passing) may be appropriated to the Native American situation.

## Colonialism

By definition, European colonialism is “the forcible takeover of land and economy”; it is the “re-structuring” of colonized economies “in order to fuel” European societies; it is also “the export of Western technologies” and ideas (Loomba 20–21). Beyond this generalized picture, however, the devastating machinery of racism and genocide looms large when one studies the Native American situation.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Reservations in the US and reserves in Canada are granted only semi-independence, the paternalistic states still act as guardians over Indians.

<sup>5</sup> “John Marshall’s description of Indian tribes as ‘dependent domestic nations’ has become the dominant phrase used in describing the Indian tribal legal status” (V. Deloria 117).

<sup>6</sup> The fact that White settlers themselves were colonized people for a while and that “colonial America” for some still means only America having been part of the British Empire will not be taken into consideration. For Natives, both colonized and later noncolonized whites represented colonial oppression since Whites continued the same old colonial policy in their own post-colonial time.

As Jace Weaver points out, the first “official” reaction of Europeans to the indigenous population was “not alterity but sameness” (9), especially once Pope Julius II declared Indians to be human beings in 1512. Yet, Europeans, no matter which country they came from, “regarded Native cultures and religious traditions as pagan and diabolic” (9). At the root of this prejudice is the colonizers’ sense of themselves as a chosen even superior people in some specific way. Blinded by their own superiority, the colonizers are “disconnected from other peoples because the others are *not* chosen” (Mohawk 439).<sup>7</sup>

A constant concomitant of colonialism, then, is racism.<sup>8</sup> The most devastating phenomenon through which racial discrimination manifested itself was genocide.<sup>9</sup> As a reminder of what a complex and wide-ranging ethnic genocide constitutes, the United Nations’ Convention on Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (drawn up in 1948, effective 12 January 1951) should be recalled, which specifies in Article II those activities that are to be considered genocidal and that are criminal offences under international law. Below follow the 5 points (listed in Churchill 45 and Deloria 241) with examples added; all the points are applicable to Native American colonial history and show how this colonial situation lived on into the 20th century:

- 1) “[k]illing members of the group”—the massacre of Indian communities for four centuries, with the Massacre at Wounded Knee in 1890 as a closing incident;<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Here Mohawk draws on Ruth Benedict’s *Race, Science, and Politics*.

<sup>8</sup> John Mohawk identifies three types of racism that have exerted influence on the fate of Native peoples: theological, scientific, and ecological racism (440–42). For a more elaborate discussion of the topic, see Robert E. Bieder’s *Science Encounters the Indian, 1820–1880: The Early Years of American Ethnology*.

<sup>9</sup> For Devon A. Mihesuah, colonialism in Native America implies “genocide, loss of lands, encroachments onto their lands by Euro-Americans and other Indians, intermarriage with tribal outsiders, population loss from disease, warfare, and removal” (38). Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, on the other hand, groups the genocide, Native peoples had and still have to endure, into three categories: *religious* genocide (the wiping out of people and cultures in the name of a certain theology); *racial* and *ethnic* genocide (atrocities stemming from “irrational hatreds against ‘others,’” like the Nazi Holocaust); *political* and *economic* genocide (“plural society brought about by invasion and colonization provides a structural base for genocide as pressures of domination, exploitation, and subjugation arise”) (189–190).

<sup>10</sup> Native North America has suffered dramatic demographic changes due to genocide—massacre included to a great extent—and epidemics. Research conducted in the 1960s

2) “[c]ausing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group”—giving Indians poisoned wine, blankets, and gifts as tokens of friendship, thus causing death, epidemics, “bodily or mental harm”;<sup>11</sup> or the slaughter of the buffalo, the economic and cultural base of the Plains Indians, in the 1870s;<sup>12</sup>

3) “[d]eliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part”—forcing Natives to leave their homes and sacred places and move under bad weather conditions to new locations;<sup>13</sup>

4) “[i]mposing measures intended to prevent births within the group”—the involuntary sterilization of many Native women in the US during the 1970s;

5) “[f]orcibly transferring children of the group to another group”—taking Indian children to off-reservation boarding schools and denying them the right to speak their languages or practice their Native customs.

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(by California anthropologists Woodrow W. Borah, Leslie B. Sompson, and Sherburn F. Cook), then in the 1980s (by Henry F. Dobyns, Russell Thornton, and Kirkpatrick Sale) raised the estimate of pre-contact population in North America from the earlier 1-2 million to 9-15 million inhabitants, of which—depending on which estimate we consider—95 to 99% were exterminated by 1900. (Even if we consider the lowest earlier estimate of 1 million pre-contact Indians, population loss amounts to two-thirds of the population.) “Surely, there can be no more monumental example of sustained genocide—certainly none involving a ‘race’ of people as broad and complex as this—anywhere in the annals of human history” (Stiffarm and Lane 37).

<sup>11</sup> A well-known example is the 1623 English-Powhatan peace conference, to which Powhatan leaders were invited by the English. At the end of the peace talks poisoned wine was served, while a toast to “eternal friendship” was proposed. The Indians who did not die at once were shot. Afterwards, the war between the Powhatan and the English continued for nine years, since the Powhatan refused to attend other peace conferences. At the time of John Smith’s arrival, approximately 30 000 Powhatan and allied Indians lived in the area. By the middle of the 17th century “only 2000 remained—decimated by warfare, disease, and migration” (Nies 131).

<sup>12</sup> By the 1880s more than 30 million buffalos were slaughtered and less than a thousand remained. The hides were shipped East, and the other body parts were left rotting. According to General Sheridan, the buffalo hunters “have done [...] more to settle the vexed Indian question than the entire regular army”; “[f]or the sake of a lasting peace, let them kill, skin and sell until the buffalos are exterminated” (Nies 281).

<sup>13</sup> An infamous case is the Trail of Tears, when 16 000 Cherokees were forced to walk for six months from Georgia to Oklahoma under harsh weather conditions in the winter of 1838. Thousands fell victim to the journey. It all happened with disregard for the 1832 Supreme Court ruling in the *Worcester v. Georgia* case, which stated that: “The Cherokee Nation, then, is a distinct community, occupying its own territory, with boundaries accurately described, and which the citizens of Georgia have no right to enter [...]” (Debo 121–22).

North American governments could have been found guilty in these points (and could still be found guilty in some); probably the reason why, although more than a hundred nations quickly ratified the Genocide Convention, the United States declined to do so for forty years (Churchill 46).

Genocide, then, is not only the killing of individuals, but also the “destruction of a [recognizably distinct] human group, even though the individual members survive” (qtd. in Churchill 45), as worded by the United Nations. In this broad sense of the term, genocidal intentions are still there in the Indian policy of White governments. There have been various attempts at breaking the endurance of the indigenous population as an ethnic group.

1) One method was to *keep down population growth*—beside the sterilization of women (1970s), the relocation policy was to depopulate reservations by drawing Indians away from poverty into big cities with unkept promises of great opportunities (1940s–80s); then reservations were hit by the Termination Act of 1953, which dissolved Indian nations found to be too small, suspended federal services, and declared them non-existent (109 tribes were terminated, only a few were restored in the 1970s); “the statistical extermination” of Natives (Churchill 59) introduced with the Dawes Act refers to “the practice of official identity” being declared on the basis of blood-quantum (1/4th of one’s blood should be of Indian parents).

2) *Western economic models were forced on Natives, yet real growth was blocked to pose no danger to Whites*—the General Allotment Act or Dawes Act (1887) broke up some of the reservation land units used/cultivated by a specific tribe, and land parcels were allotted to Indians for individual use, to cultivate not in the traditional, communal, but in the Western way. Fishing and hunting rights granted in treaties have often been violated either by restricting Indians, contrary to their treaty rights or by changing territorial conditions in ways that their livelihoods became endangered. Finally, the US government still acts as a father over his Indian “wards.” It feels entitled to exercise power over the mineral resources on reservations, thus robbing the Indians of much of the profit, keeping them in economic dependency—a key symptom of colonialism.

3) *Yet another attempt at breaking ethnic endurance was to weaken Native spiritual strength*—ignoring the sacredness of certain geographical locations in removal policies or in establishing mining or industrial areas. The sacredness of burial grounds has also been ignored as if those were archeological sites; sacred objects are put on display in museums, as if those objects did not belong to anyone. All the above generally holds true despite the American Indian Religious Freedom Act, passed in

1978, in which it is stated, that “henceforth it shall be the policy of the United States to protect and preserve for American Indians their inherent right of freedom to believe, express, and exercise the traditional religions of the American Indian, Eskimo, Aleut, and Native Hawaiian, including but not limited to access to sites, use and possession of sacred objects, and the freedom to worship through ceremonials and traditional rites” (Hampton 182).<sup>14</sup> Court cases prove how ineffective the law is.<sup>15</sup>

Forcing the Euroamerican *education system* on Natives has also been a very effective way of “despiritualizing” through assimilation<sup>16</sup>—after the mission schools of Spanish and French Jesuits, Dominicans, Franciscans, and British Protestants, off-reservation boarding schools, and, finally, public schools have been attempts at neutralizing traditional Native education. The Indian Education Act (1972) proposed to widen “Native American participation in and control over the education of their children” (Noriega 386), however, according to Phyllis Young (an American Indian Movement member, active in setting up “survival schools” on reservations), “nothing really changed, [...] Aside from some cosmetic alterations like the inclusion of beadwork, traditional dance, [...] the curriculum taught in Indian schools remained exactly the same, reaching the same conclusions, indoctrinating children with exactly the same values as when the schools were staffed entirely by white people. [...] It’s really a perfect system of colonization, convincing the colonized to colonize *each other* in the name of ‘self-determination’ and ‘liberation’” (qtd. in Noriega 387). Another weaken-

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<sup>14</sup> Churchill and Morris point out, on the one hand, how curious it is that Native Americans, who became citizens of the US in 1924 and thus should be free to exercise their religion according to the First Amendment to the Constitution, would need a religious freedom act (17). In my understanding, Churchill and Morris here underline the depth to which “theological racism” against Native Americans has permeated the American thought and how difficult it has been to fight it. Churchill and Morris also call our attention to the fact that the act “lacks any sort of enforcement provisions [...] and should therefore be viewed as a gesture (or perhaps a ‘policy aspiration’) rather than as a law, per se” (17).

<sup>15</sup> In the *Lyng v. Northwest Indian Cemetery Protective Association* case of 1988, the ruling favored society’s broader economic interests against Indian religious rights and allowed the destruction of religious sites (Churchill and Morris 20). Another telling example is the *Employment Division, Department of Human Resources of Oregon v. Smith* case of 1990. Here the argument was over the use of peyote in the Native American Church. Peyote was not outlawed, but according to the decision of the Supreme Court, “the indigenous spiritual practices would henceforth be subject to supervision under the legal codes of individual states” (Churchill and Morris 21).

<sup>16</sup> Benedict Anderson calls this “mental miscegenation” (qtd. in Loomba 173). In Ania Loomba’s interpretation “the underlying premise was [...] that Indians can mimic but never exactly reproduce English values, and that their recognition of the perpetual gap between themselves and the ‘real thing’ will ensure their subjection” (173).

ing component is that the role of Native women that has been going through a change devastating to traditional spirituality; some Native societies were matrilineal in pre-contact times, with women making important decisions, often owning property, being the spiritual strongholds of the community, educating children. Clearly, this is reflected in Native cosmologies, which “exhibit an abundant presence of feminine elements” (Jaimes and Halsey 319).

Western civilization imposed on this heritage its own distorting patriarchal system, by not negotiating with women, only with men, by restructuring property rights and shifting them to the male side, and by taking children away from the influence of mothers and grandmothers.<sup>17</sup> The traditional male role has been altered, too, the warrior protecting his people became anachronistic, the result of which is a sense of alienation and/or a split personality (Duran and Duran 36–39).<sup>18</sup> “The commodification of indigenous spirituality” (Whitt 140) is yet another, although, a quite recent phenomenon of spiritual subjugation in colonialism.<sup>19</sup>

Thus, colonialism in North America with the “acculturation stress” (Duran and Duran 32) continues, undisturbed. The 21st-century dawns on this race with the lowest incomes in the United States, the highest infant mortality rates, the greatest unemployment and the least success in educational achievements (Churchill 58). Discovery narratives, published in the last decade of the 20th and the first decade of the 21st century, relate to the Quincentenary from this cultural/historical colonial background.

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<sup>17</sup> Native women fight to preserve tribalism and do not, in general, consider feminism an alternative. As Janet McCloud put it, “Many Anglo women try, I expect in all sincerity, to tell us that our pressing problem is male supremacy. To this I have to say, with all due respect, *bullshit*. Our problems are what they’ve been for the past several hundred years: white supremacism and colonialism. And that’s a supremacism and a colonialism of which white feminists are still very much a part” (qtd. in Jaimes and Halsey 332).

<sup>18</sup> “The split ego, then, will keep one aspect of the person in touch with the pain and one aspect identifying with the aggressor. It is a well-known historical fact that some of the greatest Native American leaders were either betrayed or killed by Native American men who lost themselves in their identification with the aggressor” (Duran and Duran 36). “The warrior is further split into yet another double bind—being Native American and also living as a white person” (Duran and Duran 39).

<sup>19</sup> Laurie Anne Whitt argues that the “transformation of indigenous spiritual knowledge, objects, and rituals into commodities, and their commercial exploitation constitute a concrete manifestation of the more general, and chronic, marketing of Native America” (140). She calls this “cultural imperialism,” which “serves to extend the political power, secure the social control, and further the economic profit of the dominant culture” (140).



Weaver argues that colonialism in North America is no longer “classic colonialism,” which is out for land, which spreads from a metropolis, and where the colonizers are in a minority on the colony (13). Consequently, contemporary discovery narratives present a more sophisticated picture of the colonial context, displaying both its classic and “modern” attributes, since, by now, Weaver points out, Native Americans have become “victims of *internal colonialism*” (emphasis added), under the control of which “the native population is swamped by a large mass of colonial settlers who, after generations, no longer have a *métropole* to which to return” (13). Krupat confirms the use of “internal colonialism” for the current situation and makes the term interchangeable with “domestic imperialism,” which he defines as the “conditions of politically sustained subalternity” (30). Howard Adams elucidates what those conditions are: under “internal colonialism,” he argues, “the dominant society controls and monopolizes the important cultural institutions, the legal and political apparatus, and the class structure [...] traditional cultural values and customs are being penetrated and the content being redefined and structured” (9). Ron Welburn’s “domestic colonialism” is close in essence. His picture of it reflects, however, the counter-ripple effect in which the colonial grasp has spread from outside, moving inside in the case of Mexico, the US, and Canada. “Domestic colonialism,” Welburn declares, “creates reservations and reserves, ghettos and barrios, and these reflect a perverse concentricity of colonized peoples in old settler postcolonized societies, a kind of concentric jaw structure” (115).

### Postcolonialism

Whether postcolonialism applies to the colonial situation in Native North America to any extent today is another highly ambiguous issue. As opposed to the chronologically defined “post-colonial” (the era after colonialism, eliminated earlier in this chapter as inapplicable in the present discussion), the “postcolonial” expresses a theoretically more relevant category, overlapping the boundaries of colonialism and its aftermath, often not only rooted in, but coexisting with, the colonial. In almost canonized words, postcolonialism “is the discourse of oppositionality which colonialism brings into being” (Ashcroft, Griffith, and

Tiffin 117),<sup>20</sup> a counter-(post)-colonial discourse, that is able to “destabilize existing systems of signification of otherness, seen as falsely universalist and hence imperial, and replace them with new ones that are pluralist” (Kahn 8), intending to undermine the cultural hegemony of the West. However, there is a growing discontent as to whether postcolonialism truly speaks for the colonized subject inside the rhetoric of sophisticated pluralism. “Many critics,” as Loomba notes, “have suggested that postcolonial studies [...] remain curiously Eurocentric, dependent upon Western philosophies and modes of seeing, taught largely in the Western academy, unable to reject convincingly European frames of reference, and guilty of telescoping the diverse parts of the world into ‘the colonial question’” (256).<sup>21</sup> Arif Dirlik goes to the extent of arguing that “[p]ostcoloniality is the condition of the intelligentsia of global capitalism” (356). If so, instead of breaking a universalist hegemony, under the guise of postcolonialism, the West does nothing more than replace one discourse with another, by which it graciously pardons itself, and, at the same time, it secretly keeps the monopoly of defining itself in relation to Others and Others in relation to itself. As “narrative is authority itself” (Lyotard 321), the authority of the West maintained through power over discourse stays intact.

Is postcolonialism, then, “a less visible colonialism” (Armstrong 9)? The question naturally arises, since colonial power developed through authority over language,<sup>22</sup> and now the postcolonial plays along the same line. By being “a direct derivative of postmodern theories” (Okonkwo 1),

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<sup>20</sup> Oppositionality in postcolonialism does not imply it being the opposite of the colonial, but refers to the stance the postcolonial takes in handling the colonial.

<sup>21</sup> Saeed Ur-Rehman’s article, “Decolonizing Post-colonial Theory” (where she uses “post-colonial” as “postcolonial”), is an outburst against the theory, calling it “despotic” (31), one that writes a “hegemonic discourse” (31), in which “still the Western episteme dominates” (33), which commits the sin of canonization (35), with the final achievement of the post-colonial center replacing the colonial center (37). Chidi Okonkwo strikes a less emotional note when elaborating on the crisis in postcolonial discourse in *Decolonization: Agonistics in Postcolonial Fiction* (1999).

<sup>22</sup> When Scott Manning Stevens describes the paradigmatic stages of linguistic encounter after the discovery, he describes the White man’s taking linguistic possession over the Natives from the “denial of the presence of a real language” (3) through “linguistic fantasy” (4) and “linguistic despair” (10). Michel-Rolph Trouillot adds to the picture the “metalanguage of grammarians,” the existence of which “proved the existence of grammar in European languages,” while “spontaneous speech proved its absence elsewhere, [...] again a proof of the inferiority of non-whites” (7).

the postcolonial “drive toward identity centers around language, partly because, in postmodernity, identity is barely available elsewhere” (During 125). Moreover, to understand who writes the text of identity (who is in power), it is crucial to know what language it is written in. Is it in Cherokee, Kiowa, or Sioux or in any language of any indigenous nation in the postcolonial state? No, it is in English. No wonder many feel that power never shifts, only the name of the game changes. Colonized people have lived under the assimilating pressure of being forced to use the colonizer’s language. By now many of them have little or no access to their aboriginal languages. But “[l]anguage as culture is the collective memory bank of a people’s experience in history” (Thiong’o 289) and changing from one language to the other entails a change of cultures and “memory banks.” Under such circumstances, self-expression becomes extremely difficult; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is rightly skeptical in searching for an answer to the question “Can the Subaltern speak?” (104). Raja Rao describes the phenomenon from the perspective of the subaltern; “One has to convey in a language that is not one’s own the spirit that is one’s own”; “English is not really an alien language to us. It is the language of our intellectual make-up,” “but not of our emotional make-up” (296). Beside “dividedness” or “doubleness” there is the experience of struggling with “voicelessness.” As Dennis Lee put it:

To speak unreflectingly in a colony, then, is to use words that speak only alien space. To reflect is to fall silent, discovering that your authentic space does not have words. And to reflect further is to recognize that you and your people do not in fact have a privileged authentic space just waiting for words; you are, among other things, the people who have made an alien inauthenticity their own. You are left chafing at the inarticulacy of a native space which may not exist. So you shut up.

But perhaps—and here was the breakthrough—our job was not to fake a space of our own and write it up, but rather to find words for our space-lessness. Perhaps that *was* home. (400)

Even though colonized people speak the language of the colonizer, they are still excluded from the power game over the discourse as they do not have *natural* access to the language in which to participate. In case they want to fight, they are handicapped into a Catch-22 situation: 1) keeping the heritage and remaining indigenous goes along with either the frustration of “in-between-ness” and “spacelessness” or with withdrawing into traditionalism and from the game altogether; 2) a successful

participation for the sake of the heritage, understood as key in the survival of Native peoples entails the loss of that heritage to some degree—one is to assimilate completely either to the Whites, or to images/stereotypes of the Natives created by Whites, to be accepted into the arena. As Louis Owens argues, “In order to be recognized, and thus have a voice that is heard by those in control of power, the Native American must step into that mask and be the Indian constructed by white America” (176).

There are also other factors that contribute to the hard feelings Native American critics have about the term “postcolonialism.” Leela Gandhi observes that “a distinctly ‘romantic’ vocabulary marks the prose of several postcolonial literary theorists” (161); Native Americans have a long enough history of being romanticized to distrust similar approaches. Yet another factor is that a number of postcolonial writings ignore the Native situation altogether.<sup>23</sup> Also, in an effort to throw off the colonial yoke, Native Americans find “postcolonialism” unhelpful as it is “depoliticized” (Weaver 14). As a result, some Native critics reject the discourse of postcolonialism as non-applicable to the colonial situation; others see it as universalist, depoliticized, Eurocentric and want none of it, while still others accept it under reserve. The less canonized Native definition of postcoloniality is that it is

an attitude for *cultural resistance and revival*, a means of *reimagining* community, homeland, ethical values, body, mind, and spirit, of *decolonizing* the consciousness of communities by pronouncing

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<sup>23</sup> Elleke Boehmer, for example, proposes at the end of her list of what to take as postcolonial writing that “[t]he United States is excluded because it won independence long before other colonial places, and its literature has therefore followed a very different trajectory” (4); Boehmer pretends throughout *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature* (1995) that there is no indigenous colonial or postcolonial situation, let alone literature to consider in the US. Louis Owens makes a similar complaint about Homi Bhabha’s *The Location of Culture* (1994), in which “Bhabha gives the impression of being acutely aware of a wide panoply of minority voices,” “referencing Hispanic and Black American writers, for instance, and extensively praising Morrison’s *Beloved*, but nowhere, not even in a widespread aside, does he note the existence of a resistance literature arising from indigenous, colonized inhabitants of the Americas [...]. How, one wonders, can this student of postcoloniality, difference, liminality [...] be utterly ignorant of or indifferent to such writers as N. Scott Momaday, James Welch, Leslie Silko, Louise Erdrich, Simon Ortiz [...]?” How, one wonders, can any serious student of the ‘indigenous or native narrative,’ the term Bhabha uses to define his subject, not read and deal with Vizenor’s radically indigenous theory?” (172).

the present integrity of one's people and the struggle they must insist upon in order to *reclaim*, *reconstruct*, and *reactivate* the integrity and continuity of their social, psychological, "internatural," and metaphysical ecologies (Welburn 111, emphasis added).

Native postcolonialism is, thus, more of an activity than a passive analytical stance.<sup>24</sup>

Still, Native theoreticians have picked up on some arguments of the postcolonial rhetoric, like the center-margin dichotomy; the colonial gaze; who is whose Other; mimicry; stereotyping; questions of power and ideological authority. Due to differences in the two *Weltanschauungs*—Native and Western—and to the manifold perspectives from which these differences are looked upon, Native critics find postcolonial theory wanting and thus add novel approaches and concepts to it. King, for example, raises issues concerning putting "colonized peoples on display" (3), concerning the exhibition of Native America in the United States. Tamara L. Bray edited *The Future of the Past* on the issue of repatriation in Native America, touching on archeological, religious, and historical matters. Eduardo Duran and Bonnie Duran call attention to the need of incorporating elements of Native American cosmology—such as "process thinking" or the "noncompartmentalization of experience" (15)—into postcolonial theorizing, while Welburn misses "ecological consciousness" (109) in postcoloniality. Weaver introduces a new term when offering that postcolonial Native hermeneutic is "we-hermeneutic" (22), which takes into account the "communal character" of Native existence, along with the importance of land and recent land claims (21). Weaver also makes the point that Native communality and postcolonialism come together only as a paradox, since "postcolonialism is obsessed with the issues of identity and subjectivity" (14).

In *Native American Postcolonial Psychology* (1995) the Durans describe how peoples "assaulted in a genocidal fashion," internalize after despair "what appears to be genuine power—the power of the oppressor. [...] merely a caricature of the power actually taken from Native American people" (29). Such an act, however, leads to self-hatred,<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> As Alfred J. López remarked, "I see postcolonial writings generally as less object than activity, a body of work that seeks to address [...] contingencies in the hope of finding ways of thinking and living in its unprecedented historical moment" (6).

<sup>25</sup> This resembles Albert Memmi's theory of the psychological paradox of admiration and hate underlying the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized (45).

which can be either internalized (the symptoms are alcoholism and suicide) or externalized (manifesting itself in violence). The Durans compare the psychological effects of the Nazi Holocaust with those of Native genocide and come to the conclusion that both end up in posttraumatic stress disorder. It is “generationally cumulative” in both cases as “dysfunctional behavior will [...] become the learning environment” (31) for children. Nevertheless, there is a crucial difference: “the world has not acknowledged the Holocaust of native people,” and this “lack of acknowledgement remains one of the stumbling blocks to the healing process of Native American people” (30).

Native Americans expect a healing process that ends colonialism to evolve from without: from a changing policy in Indian-White relations; and also from within: from the maintenance of traditional cultures by flexibly adopting them to contemporary realities.

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